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Arab-Israeli Conflict

An ongoing one-hundred year crisis is happening in the western part of the Middle East on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. This crisis is known as the Arab-Israeli conflict and is one of the hottest, most controversial topics that are taking place today in the world. For centuries, the Arab-Israeli conflict has seen many battles, and wars. Still to this day, Israel fights to maintain peace while dealing with political tension and military conflicts.

This paper will explain the brief history on the reason behind the conflict; take a look on how Zionism changed the perspective of many influential leaders; the wars that have been fought throughout time between the Arab and Israelis; and explain how the is ever more growing today than ever before. This conflict has a lot of depth and is ever changing day by day. This paper will cover the general basis of this crisis while standing on the thin line between these two sides.

Before going back four thousand years and explaining up to modern day the reasoning and facts of the conflict, take a look at the map of the region that is being discussed.



The picture above shows a small slither of land that is only a couple hundred miles long, way on the western edge of the Middle East. This strip of land is known in modern day as Israel. Surrounding Israel are the countries: Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, etc. This is significant because Israel is considered the “Jewish homeland” and the countries surrounding Israel are all Muslim nations. This strip of land has been the cause of much violence that has taken place within the last hundred years and will be explained further in the coming paragraphs.

Brief history of the land of Israel:

Most of history and reason behind the Israeli-Arab conflict has taken place recently beginning towards the end of the 19th and the start of the 20th century. However, before jumping to that time in history, it needs to be understood that there are biblical beliefs that some of the Israel land is to be holy. Three of the most followed religions in the world today (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), all believe that the Israeli city of Jerusalem is a “holy city”. The three

religions all have different connections and stories of why Jerusalem is so sacred; and the only thing shared between the three scriptures is the “Temple Mount”.

Zionism is the Jewish nationalist movement of the Jewish culture in support of the reestablishment of the land of Israel. In biblical scriptures both Christianity Zionists and Jewish Zionists believe that the inhabitants of Israel should be the Jewish people. The main person behind the Zionist movement is a man named Theodore Herzl. Herzl was a Hebrew journalist who grew up during the anti-Semitic time in the late 1800's. After devoting his life to the study and reasoning behind Zionism, Herzl published the famous pamphlet called “The Jewish State” in 1896. “The Jewish State” brings together the idea of emergence of the Jewish community to form their own state where they feel welcomed and given the ability to prosper. After the publishing of “The Jewish State”, thousands of traditional Jews started to establish themselves in Israel up until World War I. (Samuel, 1959)

World War I was a complete territorial change-up of the world's land. After the demise of the Ottoman Empire (controlled the Israeli/Palestinian territory prior to the war) the French and British gained control of most of that region excluding the Arabian Peninsula. The United Kingdom had gained control of what was then considered Palestine territory and mandated that land. During this time, the British adopted the growing popular position of Zionism and claimed it in what was called “The Balfour Declaration”.

The Balfour Declaration was a letter from Arthur Balfour a former prime minister of Britain to Lord Rothschild (president of the British Zionist Federation) explaining the approval of the British government on Jewish Zionist aspirations. This happens to be significant because

after the declaration, tens of thousands of Jews began flocking to what we know as Tel Aviv and other areas in modern day Israel. (Lee, 1962)

Post World War II:

World War II was a troubling time in world history and basically only the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Shortly after the war, the United Nations was created. Britain who still had control over the region of Palestine saw the conflict that was erupting in that part of the world. The British government handed off the responsibilities to the newly created U.N. Many Zionists who saw that after what the Jewish people went through, that they deserved a place that they can call their homeland. Many Jews escaped Europe after the war to find refuge in what was back then considered the Palestinian region of Britain. This is where the conflict began because while the Jewish population was starting to take over, the Palestine's and the other Arabic countries surrounding saw them as intruders to their land.

The beginning of the Israeli-Arab conflict happens in 1947 when the United Nations votes on Resolution 181. Resolution 181 was not a very well thought out partition plan that recommended the creation of two independent states, one being the Jewish State, and the other Arab. Both having special international control of over the "holy city" of Jerusalem. The plan was poor because the borders between the two states were highly opposed by both sides which led to many wars to come.

Arab-Israeli War 1948:

May 14th 1948 was the day the British mandate ended and the state of Israel is born. This was also the day the first Arab-Israeli war broke out. The Arab-Israeli war started when five Arab nations consisting of: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia launched an air on the

city of Tel Aviv, which the Israelis resisted. The state of Israel ultimately won this war; they even gained more territory from it. However, this only created more tension between then neighboring countries all while creating more refugees from both sides of the battle.

The conflict seized up until 1956 where there was a small battle over the Suez Canal between Egypt and Israel (with help from Britain and France). The canal was a major shipping lane that could connect to all of Europe. Once fighting began, the United States, Soviet Union, and United Nations stepped in and forced Israel along with France and Britain to withdraw. Ultimately, Israel won the rights to the canal but the three countries received some humiliation. (Johnston, 1977)

Arab-Israeli War 1967:

There was still tension following the 1948 war, this tension erupted on June 5, 1967 and continued until June 10, 1967. This war is known as the third Arab-Israeli War, also considered the Six-Day War. The basis of this war began when the attacks on Israel from Palestinian guerrilla groups based in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan began to grow. With the attacks growing so was a group that was named Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and their ultimate goal was to take down Israel. There were numerous attacks on both sides and much government tension leading up to the official start of the war.

After years of tension over border lines, attacks on one another, and leaders of the neighboring countries mutual defense pact, Israel launched a pre-emptive attack on Egypt marking the start of the war. After the attacks on Egypt, that sparked the countries of Jordan and Syria to join the fight. On June 7th Israeli forces drove out Jordanian forces and took control of Jerusalem and the majority of the West Bank. Finally the U.N. stepped in and proposed that the

countries call for a cease fire. After days passed all the countries agreed and the war came to a close. Israel demoralized the Arab countries and quickly established their dominance. (Khan, 1967)

Yom Kippur War 1973

The fourth Arab-Israeli war happened on October 6, 1973 on an Israeli holy day called Yom Kipper. While the Israeli military's guard was down, Egyptian and Syrian forces executed a coordinated attack against Israel. During the attack the Egyptian troops took control of a large portion of the Sinai Peninsula, while the Syrians tried over taking Golan Heights. Soon the Iraqi forces joined in for the Arabs and the U.S. stepped in to help the Israelis (after waiting 10 days as curiosity to Egypt).

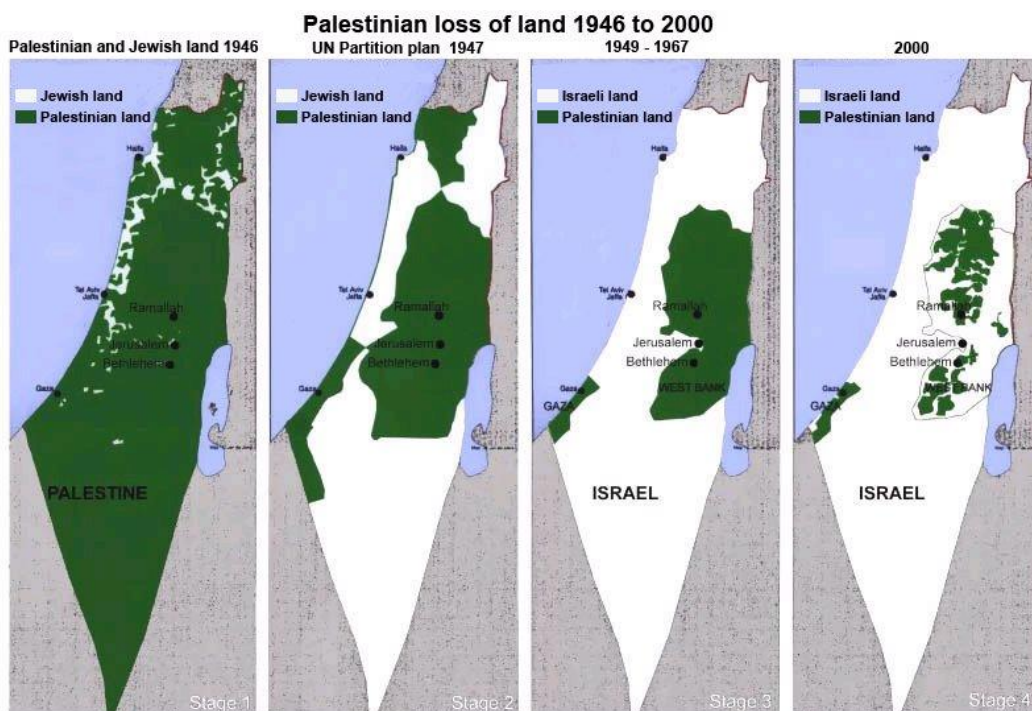
The war caused a heavy amount of casualties and was very tragic to all three countries. However, Israel agreed to give up/give back segments of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt which led to the peace agreement between the two countries. For Syria, the war ended up being a disaster. The Syrian military was defeated and Israel ended up controlling more territory in the Golan Heights. (Brown, 2004)

Arab/Palestinian-Israeli Conflict up to Present Day:

The Yom Kippur war in 1973 marked the last so called war that these two sides have had. However, there is still a lot of violence that takes place in that region almost 40 years later. This is where political parties and the controversy over this topic gets a little heated, especially here in the United States. Unbiased facts of the situation entail that the U.S. is without a doubt the biggest supplier of weapons and financial aid to the state of Israel (about 16 million a day). Now there are two sides to every story, and it is understanding that the Arab/Palestinian people may

see this as imperialism. There is also the fact that Israel has a strong military presence in all of the designated Palestine territory. In 1993 President Clinton was very close to reaching a resolution between the government of Israel and the PLO's. This agreement was named the Oslo Agreement. In the Oslo agreement, the Israeli prime minister agreed to withdraw his military out of parts of the Gaza Strip and West Bank and give this territory to the new government of Palestine.

Since then, chaos has erupted to a whole new level. The Oslo agreement was never really taken into action, and to this day Israel is not only still occupying that land that they designated to the Arab people but they are building on that land as well. The Palestine's have answered with violence and numerous terror attacks on Israel. The people of Palestine even elected a well known terrorist group called Hamas to represent them in the fight of what they call their land. The map below will help further understand how that region has changed in the last hundred or so years.



This ongoing conflict has seen its fair share of violence and political disputes. It is a very sensitive topic that many leaders throughout the world are careful to take sides on. The Israeli side has established military dominance and believes that this is their “homeland” and that they deserve the rights to it. While the Arab people say that they were their first and was promise territory in the state of Israel. They see Israelis as intruders and will not let them take over their land without a fight. Unfortunately, the violence between the Arab-Israelis will not stop without huge sacrifices for both sides.

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